

STATEMENT BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES OF THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HEARINGS ON MAY 5, 1981
ON EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR
THE WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

I AM WILLIAM R. RIEDEL, CHIEF, PORTS AND WATERWAYS PLANNING STAFF, U. S. COAST GUARD. I REPRESENTED THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ON THE INTERAGENCY LIAISON COMMITTEE OF THE WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL. I AM PLEASED TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO DISCUSS THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S VIEWS ON AND PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF THE WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL.

THE ACT ESTABLISHING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC LAW 89-670 DATED OCTOBER 15, 1966. PROVIDED FOR THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL. SECTION 7 OF THE DOT ACT CONTAINS THIS PROVISION USING THE LANGUAGE "THE WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL ESTABLISHED UNDER SECTION 101 OF PUBLIC LAW 89-80 IS HEREBY EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO NAVIGATION FEATURES OF WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS". SUBSEQUENTLY, WHEN OTHER MEMBERS WERE ADDED TO THE COUNCIL, DOT WAS GRANTED FULL MEMBERSHIP.

UNDER THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE DOT ACT, THE SECRETARY SERVES AS THE PRINCIPAL ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT ON TRANSPORTATION RELATED MATTERS. THE INTERMODAL NATURE OF THE NATION'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS SUCH THAT INVESTMENT IN ONE AREA SUCH AS WATER TRANSPORTATION MUST BE EXAMINED VERY THOROUGHLY FOR IMPACTS ON THE WHOLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND ON COMPETING TRANSPORTATION MODES.

WE FULLY SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR THE WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL IN FISCAL YEAR 1982. WHILE IT WAS EFFECTIVE IN SOME AREAS, SUCH AS DEVELOPING PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS AND PREPARING THE FIRST AND SECOND NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS, THE WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL HAS NOT FUNCTIONED WELL AS A POLICY MAKING FORUM.

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEELS BECAUSE OF THE COMPLEX NATURE OF MOST WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS, AN EFFECTIVE FEDERAL COORDINATION MECHANISM IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF THIS MOST BASIC RESOURCE.

IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT WATER RESOURCE PLANNING SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED AT THE LOWEST GOVERNMENT LEVEL POSSIBLE BY THE RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES -- LOCAL, STATE, FEDERAL -- TO SATISFY AN IDENTIFIED NEED. IN ACCOMPLISHING THESE TASKS, THE FEDERAL COORDINATING PROCESS WOULD PROVIDE THE NECESSARY MECHANISM TO DISCUSS AND RECOMMEND RESOLUTION OF NATIONAL WATER NEEDS. DISCUSSIONS ARE UNDERWAY AT THE CABINET LEVEL TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC ADMINISTRATION PLANS FOR COORDINATING WATER RESOURCES ACTIVITIES.

THIS CONCLUDES MY PREPARED STATEMENT, MR. CHAIRMAN. I WILL BE PLEASED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.